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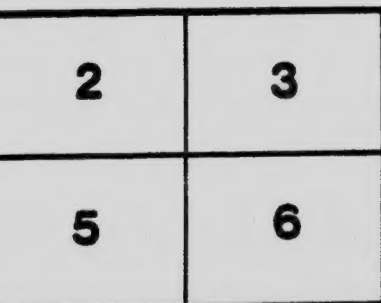
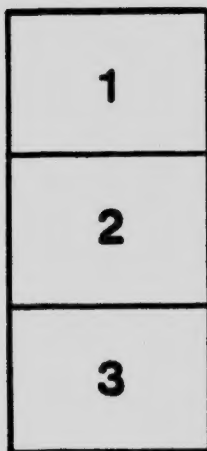
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Wages a Factor in Agriculture

Canada Pays More for Farm Labor than any of Her Chief Competitors.

Canada and the United States pay higher wages to farm laborers than any of the important grain producing countries of Europe. The cost of living in America is decidedly higher than it is across the Atlantic. In other words from the standpoint of labor alone, it costs more to raise agricultural products in Canada than it does in any European country. On the other hand, the price of Canadian produce laid down in Great Britain must approximate very closely to the price of the European product. That being the case, wherein is the Canadian farming industry going to benefit when its own home market is left unprotected and it is unable to receive better prices in the old country?

A Factor in International Competition.

This item of the wages of farm laborers is one of the contributing influences in the trade situation between nations which must not be overlooked. True, it is only one influence but it is an important one. Every Canadian knows how each summer great demands are made on the eastern labor market for men to help with the harvest in the west, and how the western farmers have to pay big prices to get the work done. For the year 1908, the farmers of Saskatchewan paid their hired help an average of \$26.70 per month, those of Manitoba paid \$25.70, those of Alberta \$26.75, and in Ontario the average monthly wage was \$23.10. These figures give some indication of the cost of farming, but they must be considered in the light of conditions which call for a big effort at harvest time and not for any protracted term of service. Viewed in this way the average monthly wage is but a small proportion of the wage paid in harvest time. For purposes of comparison, however, it will be found sufficiently accurate.

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Produce Large crops at Low Cost.

The largest wheat producing and wheat exporting country in the world is Russia. Her exportation in 1902 was 112 million bushels; in 1904 it was 169 million bushels, and in 1906, 132 million bushels. Over the period 1901-06 she had 24 per cent of her product available for exportation. The wage paid to agricultural laborers as estimated for 1909 was \$12.88 per month, or not one-half the amount paid in Western Canada.

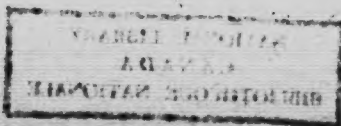
Roumania, which has 42 per cent. of its wheat production for export, has fourteen million acres under cultivation and what is more interesting, she has 1,103,302 peasant proprietors cultivating small holdings of 25 acres or less. Over the period 1902-06, she exported annually over fifty million dollars worth of grain. The cost of production of these products is extremely low, owing to the fact that nearly the whole population assists in the harvesting operations. Comparative figures as to the wages paid are unobtainable, but it will be found that the same conditions prevail approximately as in Russia and Hungary.

Hungary ships out 32 per cent. of her wheat production. In 1907, she had 8,579,000 acres of her arable land under wheat, or approximately 25 per cent. Over 68 per cent. of her total population are engaged in agriculture. Average wages for 1907 were \$12.32 per month, or again not half the rate that is being paid in Canada.

The only other European countries which have a surplus for export are Bulgaria and Servia. The former has about 33 per cent. of her product available for export and the latter about 25 per cent., as estimated over the period 1901-05. Five-sevenths of the population of Bulgaria, or over three million people, are engaged in agriculture. The wage paid to laborers on Bulgarian farms approximates that paid in Hungary or slightly less than one-half the Canadian wage.

Canada's Chief Rivals.

Canada's chief competitors as exporters of grain and flour in America are the United States and Argentina. The latter country is showing wonderful progress as a producer of wheat, flour and meat. In the agricultural year 1908-09 she had forty million acres under cultivation, of which forty per cent. were under wheat. There was actually an increase in cultivated acreage of ten per



cent. over the preceding year. In 1908 she exported 3,636,294 tons of wheat, an increase of half a million tons over the preceding year. The regular farm laborer gets only about \$15.40 per month which is the figure which should be compared with the monthly wage on Canadian farms.

Trifle Lower in United States.

The conditions in the United States approximate to those in Canada though there is a probability that wages are a trifle lower. With its immense surplus production, amounting to \$347,000,000 for the year 1909-10, the United States offers keen competition to the Canadian farmer when he seeks to enter the markets of the world.

Summarizing and tabulating results, it is found that the chief countries with which Canada will have to compete in the British and European markets are Argentina, the United States, Russia, Hungary, Roumania, Bulgaria and Servia, Sweden, and Denmark.

An Average Account.

The average wages paid on the farms of these countries over periods as nearly coincident as possible are as follows:—

Dominion of Canada....	\$24.60	per month.	
United States	24.00	"	"
Argentina	15.40	"	"
Russia	12.88	"	"
Hungary	12.32	"	"
Roumania	12.32	"	" (estimated)
Bulgaria and Servia.....	12.32	"	"
Sweden	19.60	"	"
Denmark	19.04	"	"

All these figures are naturally approximate, but for purposes of comparison, they will be found as nearly accurate as necessary. Wages vary from month to month. In harvest time they are higher than in springtime and in springtime they are much higher than in winter. Moreover a difference is made where the farmers include board in the contract. But generally speaking the above table indicates the difference between the cost of labor to the Canadian farmer and what it costs his competitors in the other great agricultural countries of the world. When these differences are

spread over a whole army of laborers and are extended all the year round, it must be apparent that, in this one item of wages alone, it must cost the Canadian farmer very much more than the European farmer to produce his crops.

A Daring Proposal.

In knocking down tariff walls and entering into the arena of competition on equal terms with the rest of the world, young Canada would be doing a very daring thing. With her own home market safeguarded, it is all very well for her to attempt to place her surplus products in competition with the products of European countries, but when, as has been shown frequently before, she will have to fight to hold her own market, it will be a very different proposition. Already a surprising amount of foreign produce is imported into the country despite existing tariff protection. With more of this coming in, the Canadian farmer will find prices for domestic produce declining. There will not be the same profit in selling at home, nor can he make up for the loss in the foreign markets, for there he will be subjected to an even more severe competition.

It will take some years for wages to adjust themselves to the new conditions, for the rate of wages in Canada depends more on the supply of laborers than on the cost of living. The farmers of the West will not find it any easier to get labor when prices drop than when they are high, and for a time at least they will have to pay prevailing prices for their help. This will leave them open to the competition of the farmers of all these other agricultural countries where wages are much lower.



